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How One Wealth Manager Helped A Client Uncover $250,000 Of Lost Marriott Stock

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When Judith McGee got her certified financial planning designation in 1979, she never imagined that treasure hunting and investigating would become part of her job. But sometimes, when heirs of clients who've ignored McGee's advice about tidy record-keeping come into her office, treasure hunting is exactly what McGee has to do.

Recently, the daughter of a woman who'd been a client since the 1980's brought McGee a stack of paperwork she'd inherited from her mom. It included a stub of a dividend statement for Marriott International, but the value of the stake was unclear. McGee and her associates took to the phones, eventually reaching financial record-keeping company Computershare. Their answer? This client had owned enough Marriott shares to count for a $250,000 stake – boosting the value of her estate "far north" of the $2 million McGee had thought she was dealing with.

While the whole episode is not how McGee usually spends her time ("I like to make sure that clients' assets and financial lives are in dying order," she notes), she says that "it's kind of fun to be able to feel like you help somebody."

McGee oversees a $514 million (as of June 30, 2017) book of business, and her typical client has a $1.5 million net worth. Roughly 70% of these clients are pre- or in retirement, which means that capital preservation is paramount.

"I've always said that the clients we have are the millionaires next door," she says. "They're serious about taking care of their families and themselves. They're not high rollers, they're not looking for the next great idea. They're looking for predictable and substantially solid growth in their portfolios and many have to depend on that income for the long term."

As a result, McGee – the number-one advisor in Oregon in the Forbes list of top wealth advisors – structures her client's portfolios using risk-budgeted asset allocation, incorporating open-end mutual funds, ETFs, and individual stocks and bonds as needed. And, importantly, as it fits the client's risk tolerance.

Photo Courtesy of Judith McGee

Judith McGee is one of Forbes' top wealth advisors in Oregon.

"My best piece of advice: a portfolio has to not only match the needs of the client but it also has to match the client's temperament," she says. And for investors, she continues, "the best wisdom is don't get nervous in the chute. Invariably, those who try to time the market will lose. They will not protect their principal."